

THE TRAGEDY OF MARIO KOHLY

Mario Kohly is an important Cuban anti-communist leader presently serving time on a Federal prison farm in Pennsylvania.

In early 1961, in a Washington lawyer's office, CIA agents offered Kohly \$500,000 in American currency if he would induce his 45,000-member underground organization in Cuba to join in the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion. Kohly declined because he rightly feared that Castro agents had infiltrated the leadership of this ill-fated CIA venture.

Then, late in 1963, Kohly was arrested by Secret Service agents in New York and charged with "counterfeiting the currency of a foreign government." He was tried and sentenced to serve two years in prison and in January of this year he was given an additional year for contempt of court.

Kohly's plan was to sabotage the Cuban economy by flooding Cuba with \$50 million of counterfeit pesos, but he was betrayed to the authorities by a planted American agent. It seems that Kohly had unwittingly infringed upon President Kennedy's secret agreement with Khrushchev, made at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, to protect Castro from Cuban exile pressures and a corollary secret agreement with Castro made at the time of the ransom of those Cubans caught in the Bay of Pigs trap.

Despite the fact that the United States has adhered to Castro's stipulation to keep Kohly out of circulation, Castro now wants Kohly—dead! Recently the FBI received a tip from Kohly's organization that Castro was sending one of his top assassins to America to kill Kohly. The FBI notified the Federal Bureau of Prisons, which promptly transferred Kohly from Lewisburg Penitentiary, a maximum security prison, to the prison farm at Allenwood, a minimum security institution.

Not only is it much easier for an assassin to knock off Kohly at Allenwood, the frail, 66-year-old Kohly, who is under a doctor's care, has been assigned to work at hard labor where he will be even more vulnerable to assassination. According to secret FBI information, Castro has gone all out to get Kohly by giving his agent a lavish expense account plus a \$75,000 fee upon completion of the job!

Several Americans who, over the years, have helped Kohly, have disappeared or died mysteriously, including multi-millionaire building contractor, Louis Berlanti and his son, whose private plane was last seen over Lake Okeechobee, Florida, in 1963. Berlanti, who had extensive business interests in Cuba confiscated by the Castro government, had given Kohly over \$50,000 of his own money and had been authorized by Generalissimo Raphael Trujillo, the late Dominican dictator, to withdraw \$53 million of Dominican funds from a New York bank. Berlanti had \$30 million with him when his plane disappeared. The New York law firm of former Vice President Richard Nixon, representing the Trujillo family, is trying to locate and recover the missing millions. In 1960, while he was still Vice Presi-

dent, Nixon, at the request of the late Senator Owen Brewster (R., Maine) asked the CIA to help the Kohly organization overthrow the Castro regime and for a while the CIA actively cooperated with Kohly.

Undercover CIA agents leased a \$460 per month house on 32nd Street in Georgetown, next door to the home of CIA Director Allen Dulles, for Kohly's headquarters. The house had plenty of bedrooms where visiting Cuban exiles who wanted to confer with Kohly could stay overnight; also, it was an impressive place where Kohly could ask anyone of importance to Washington without embarrassment. CIA operatives sold Kohly on the idea that the best way to break the Castro economy would be to flood Cuba with counterfeit currency.

Richard Marrow, an engineer who was working electronic inventions on a CIA contract, came to Kohly with a batch of ten-peso notes that were perfect reproductions of Cuban currency. The counterfeit plates were made with the aid of expert engravers of the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. While it is against U.S. laws to counterfeit any foreign government currency or bonds, the CIA representative assured Kohly that they had obtained U.S. Government "clearance" for him to use the spurious pesos to subvert the Castro economy. However, soon thereafter Castro changed the printed design on Cuban currency, so this clandestine operation promoted by the CIA was suspended.

After John F. Kennedy took office as President, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, McGeorge Bundy, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Richard Bissell, Deputy Director of the CIA, prevailed upon the new President to support another Cuban exile group headed by Manuel Antonio de Varona, who was later replaced by Dr. Jose Miro Cardona, a Cuban judge who had joined Castro in the revolution and who Castro put in office as the first revolutionary Prime Minister of Cuba. Later Castro kicked him out when he decided to become Prime Minister himself. Cardona came to the U.S. and was immediately embraced by the State Department, and appointed coordinator of the so-called Cuban Revolutionary Council that was supported by CIA funds deposited in a Miami bank. This group spent \$40 million on the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion operations.

Cardona was thoroughly hated by the anti-Castro Cubans because he drew up the harsh code of Castro laws that led to the "blood baths" after Castro seized power. Also, Cardona had seized \$2 billions in U.S. property in Cuba without making any compensation. Under Cardona's direction the Bay of Pigs invasion was doomed to failure from the very beginning since Cubans despised and feared Cardona next to Castro.

The CIA and State Department tried to induce Kohly to join forces with Cardona. He flatly refused. As a further inducement the CIA agents in the office of Kohly's lawyer, offered Kohly a briefcase containing \$500,000 in American currency. With an outburst of temper, Kohly ordered the CIA representative out of